Embedded Instruction for Early Learning
Tools for Teachers

Practice Brief: Practice 2

To help write high-quality priority learning targets it is useful to…
Think about developmentally appropriate; functional and aligned; generative; observable and measurable (i.e., conditions and criteria specified) priority learning targets.

Practice description:
Priority learning targets indicate the skills or behaviors you want a child to learn. They include information about the conditions and activities in which the behavior is expected to occur and the criterion for achieving the learning target. Priority learning targets for embedded instruction should be developmentally appropriate; functional and aligned; generative; and observable and measurable. When learning targets have these features they are considered high-quality learning targets. Developmentally appropriate refers to a skill that is age-appropriate, individually appropriate, and culturally relevant. Functional and aligned means the child's performance of the skill is needed for engagement in important aspects of daily life including participation in the general curriculum, independence in ongoing activities, and membership with peers. Generative means the child's performance of the skill is useful, adaptable, and portable across settings, people, materials, and events. Observable and measurable refers to a skill that is observable, such that it can be counted, timed, or described and that the conditions and the criteria for child performance are indicated.

Why is it important for embedded instruction?
When priority learning targets include the quality features of developmentally appropriate, functional and aligned, generative, and observable and measurable it is easier to embed instruction for them within ongoing classroom activities, routines, and transitions. Quality priority learning targets are also more likely to support children's engagement and learning in everyday activities. Taking the time to write down priority learning targets is important to make sure you, your team, and the child's family have clarity about what and when you will teach.

Tips for using this practice:
- Write down children's priority learning targets.
- Use the Learning Target Planning Form to help ensure learning targets are developmentally appropriate; functional and aligned; generative; and observable and measurable.
- Share learning targets with your team and children's families.
- Review learning targets to make sure they are good fit for the child.